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From the Commanding Officer: Rumors

Peace, ground war, liberty, no liberty, VIP visits, no VIP visits, beer day (important stuff!), no beer day, etc., etc. The rumors have been flying fast and furious this week, mostly because every time we talk to somebody on the beach we get different information about the world in general and us in particular.

Being isolated on a ship and being in a combat zone tend to lead us into speculation. Although most of the stories originate off the ship, we should all try to listen very, very, very carefully and stop spreading inaccurate information. We're all extremely interested in the news about the war and what's happening on the

ship, but let's stick to the facts, not rumor, innuendo and guesswork. Don't get your friends all bent out of shape if you don't know something for sure. If you do hear a story and have an uncontrollable urge to speculate on it, let people understand that what you're saying is your personal opinion. Right now, no one knows when (or if) our folks will leave for the amphibs, the ground war will start, or we'll move north. As soon as President Bush, Tom Brokaw, Lenny the newspaper man, or someone else important calls us with the facts, we'll share them.

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Mercy crewmembers dress up in costumes to celebrate Madi Gras night. (U. S. Navy photo by D. A. Lynn)

Continued from cover

Speaking of keeping you informed...According to AP news, there are four U.S. aircraft carriers in the Arabian Gulf, an unprecedented action. The Ranger, Midway, Kennedy, and America are all here, along with two battleships and bunches of other-

shooters. Like I've said, when we move north, we'll have lots of friends nearby. The air attacks on Kuwait and Iraq continue. According to a Thursday DoD news briefing, we have over 516,000 troops in theater and have flown nearly 70,000 sorties. Total U.S. aircraft losses were 18; Iraqi aircraft losses were 72, with an additional 138 sitting in Iran. Saudi forces

are holding over 1,100 enemy prisoners of war, including several deserters who crossed the border and voluntarily turned themselves in. That's the news in a nutshell.

Hang in there, gang. Keep smiling and don't forget to mark on your calendars that we'll be in Thailand from the 29th to the 31st this month.
-Me.

From the Command Master Chief: We are ready

By walking the ship every day talking with the crew and by monitoring the mass casualty drills, it is easy for me to see the big picture of how ready we are to treat patients.

After my last article, "Vietnam reflections," many of you commented on how much you liked my stories of combat experience.

As a matter of fact, I was in Vietnam twice, in Saigon in 1962 and Da Nang, South Vietnam, in 1969-70. When my surgical team was disbanded at Navy Facility Hospital Da Nang in late summer of 1970, I had the privilege of serving aboard USS Sanctuary for three months to complete my second one-year tour.

Comparing Sanctuary with Mercy is not very difficult; they are about as different as night and day. To sum it up, Mercy is three times the ship Sanctuary was -- the crew and bed capacity are three times larger on the Mercy.

Our operational areas were less than a mile offshore. Even though we were considered a third echelon medical unit, we received casualties straight from the field. Capt. Robert Abbe can attest to this, as he also served aboard USS Sanctuary during that time.

In those days, a casualty from the field with more than five breaks to the bone and a compound fracture was a candidate for automatic amputation. Many of the wounded had lain in the heat and mud of the field for long periods before they were brought in, and infections were common.

Now everything is state-of-the-art, we have more antibiotics to choose from and the surgical techniques are better. Still in the weeks ahead, hard "life-over-limb" decisions will have to be made by the orthopedic surgeons.

I remember standing in Triage one night when they brought in a young, well-built Marine hit by a misfired motor flare. His left leg was almost

amputated above the knee, and his right leg was broken in six places above the knee, with a compound fracture of both extremities. The Marine looked up at the orthopedic surgeon, Cmdr. Bill Baily, and calmly said, "I guess you're going to have to take them off, huh doc." Baily briefly looked at the wound and replied "Hell, I'm tired of taking off arms and legs, I'm going to try to save yours!"

I assisted in surgery as the doctor pulled the knee cap (patella) back and pinned the Marine's right femur together and then applied traction, splinted and casted both legs. It was a risky decision. I don't know what the final outcome was as the Marine was medevaced back to the U.S. a few days later. That was the reality of war then.

I will not be surprised if we are called upon to treat civilian casualties of the Gulf war, including children. While attached to the surgical team in Da Nang, we did many assists in the villages providing corrective surgery for children and adults wounded in the war. Many of those children are American citizens now, but some are still in Vietnam.

From what I can see, the professionalism then and now is about the same. The players, however, are different.

You may ask yourself, how will I perform under stress of combat in treating war casualties? Most of you will

have already resolved that issue in your minds. For those who still have doubts, let me help you put them to rest by saying "practice makes perfect."

While aboard USS Jason (AR-8) during my last deployment in 1989, we trained very hard, and we were ready. We had two medical emergencies, and everything went by smoothly. The two cases were very different. In one, we medevaced a female with skull, back and neck fractures. This required rigging, hoisting and dropping a Neil Robertson stretcher to a boat in rough seas at Wake Island. In the second, we extracted two Marines, one dead and one wounded, from West York Island in uncharted waters using a rigged air-sea-litter and rubber dingy. For both of these, we were ready.

"Being ready" is the reason we train, train, train -- so that we will perform automatically when the time comes. The less confusion, the less stress and the more we successfully perform each casualty scenario. The better we will feel about ourselves, the better we will perform and make critical decisions if the casualties arrive. From the helo deck to casualty receiving to the OR, PACU, ICU and the wards, I am confident we are as ready to perform our mission if or when we go north. See you in the trenchers.

- HMCM(SW) R. A. Cooper

The Pulse

The Pulse is the official publication of the Medical Treatment Facility aboard USNS Mercy (T-AH 19). It is intended for shipboard personnel and contains professional information relative to members aboard the ship. Opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Department of the Navy or any other governmental department or agency. Contributions are welcome and will be published as space permits, subject to editing and possible abridgment. The Pulse is a weekly publication, submissions must be received by the editor by Tuesday COB.

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Pay guys: yes, yes, yes – you will all get paid

You may have noticed the past two issues I've only submitted a couple of fairly serious essays about Afro-American history. Well, I could try to obfuscate, by suggesting that DK3 Adams ate my disbursing articles, or by submitting that since the Judge left, it just didn't feel the same; but, alas, I know that you're all too smart for that. So here's the truth -- yes, I've been hiding, ducking around corners, and otherwise attempting to juke all of my beloved, indefatigable, problem-ridden and generally bankrupt customers. But, weakened by my now 18-day long fast (in preparation for beer day) and jolted by the latest blindside salvo in the chow line from one of my considerate shipmates, I can remain silent no more. Yes, yes, yes -- you will all get paid, and here's how we're gonna do it.

First, a word about the personnel-disbursing interface has been long overdue. The system is set up so that disbursing and personnel must work in concert. Personnel handles your service records. Based upon their input, we compute your pay. I will elaborate on this subject next week because proper coordination between disbursing clerks and personnelmen is what makes for efficient pay management. I also would like to note that the personnelmen on board are first-rate, and have performed superbly under often stressful conditions.

Second, every reservist who was not listed on the DDS transmittal for February 15 has the option to request

to be paid locally. The Defense Finance and Accounting Service has indicated that a number of reservists have not had Master Military Pay Accounts opened. Consequently, this office has sent a fax and a message to DFAS containing the names and SSN's of our customers who may be affected. Additionally, I have received a verbal commitment from Ms. Cheryl Teter, quality assurance manager for Operation Desert Storm, that she will personally ensure USNS Mercy members on our fax and message will be processed expeditiously. Meanwhile, your disbursing office will continue to offer local payment until your first direct deposit transfer. In regard to reserve medical officers, the latest information I have, via INMAR-SAT, indicates they will receive the same special monthly pays as their active-duty counterparts. These entitlements will automatically post to your account, with a target date of March 1. Specific financial information will be available on your Leave and Earnings Statements. The subject of our combat duty tax exemption has been broached often -- like everywhere I go on this raft. The latest is that DFAS has instituted a new program to compute and process the exemption for Desert Storm servicemembers. Field input from this command has been forwarded. The exemption will now be reflected on a future Leave and Earnings Statement, dependent upon DFAS processing time. Contrary to popular opinion, I have no directive to

stop BAQ/VHA due to our crossing into the dreaded fourth dimension.

So here's the truth -- yes I've been hiding, ducking around corners, and otherwise attempting to juke all my beloved, indefatigable, problem-ridden and generally bankrupt customers

By that I mean -- your BAQ/VHA does not automatically stop at six-months. If that were to change, we would complain mightily, because I would lose mine too! Speaking of new dimensions, your disbursing office is about to boldly go where much of the fleet has gone before. We are implementing the Uniform Microcomputer Disbursing System, or UMIDS. What this means is that in the near future we will no longer be at the mercy of the Navy's Pony Express mail system. I'll discuss this more later. Actually, you know, a month to get mail isn't that bad when you consider all those poor, swimming Mustangs.

Finally, when you stop me some place other than the office to ask that burning question, have a heart, I'm not eating much lately -- so I can get the most out of my two beers -- so I may not be quite as understanding as normal. Thanks. -- *For the Pay Guys, Peace, Ensign Charles Moore, DISBO*

From the Command Career Counselor: CPO Candidates

It's that time of the year. The chief petty officer candidates selection board for FY 92 will meet in June 1991. Candidates should have turned in all updated information by the first week of January. You should check your microfiche to see what entries are missing or need correcting. Your microfiche is updated when you reenlist. If you are on a six-year contract with a 48-month extension, you could go ten years without your file being updated.

After you feel that you have collected any missing paper work, you need to prepare your package.

Here are some pointers: Keep it simple, no need to send college transcripts if the information is recorded on your page four. Make sure you include current evaluations, updated pages four, five, nine and special qualifications. Place a table of contents on top, as well as enclosure numbers, your name and your social security number. Every page should be stamped "certified copy", and the entire package should be stapled together. Place a stamped, self-addressed post card inside the package, and the receiving office will return it to you when the package is opened, or

you can register your envelope at the post office. There is an example of the cover letter posted at the career counselor's office, as well as the mailing address for the board.

For selected reserves, the message is out, you may be involuntarily recalled for up to 12 months (from original date reported on active duty). If you are interested in reenlisting in the U.S. Navy, prior approval will have to be received. To start the process, submit a request chit through your chain of command and turn it in to the career counselor's office.

-- HMC Black

Mercy crew readies for safety standdown week

This week will be a safety standdown week; a time to step back and look at how you can make your work place safer. Safety training may not be the most exciting way to spend a few hours, but it's very important to improve safety procedures now, rather than after an accident has occurred.

Safety standdown doesn't have to be a series of boring lectures.

Safety standdown will involve two hours of general safety training either Tuesday or Wednesday, and six hours of divisional safety training at other times during the week. This standdown should give us a chance to look at our procedures and to see how we do our jobs from a safety perspective. The object is to involve everyone in the standdown, not just safety petty officers and division officers. Safety

standdown will emphasize a fundamental principle of safety: safety is a matter of teamwork. Everyone is responsible for safety and for correcting hazards.

Some of the training planned includes reviews of things such as donning an emergency escape breathing device (EEBD), which fire extinguisher to use on what type of fire, and techniques for safely lifting heavy items.

Other safety topics include medical emergency, infectious waste, electrical, mental health and trash-burning. These topics may not be among your personal favorites, but then there's only so much one can say about steel beach safety (don't splash cocoa butter in your eyes?) or Dubai liberty safety before those subjects become boring.

Safety standdown doesn't have to be a series of boring lectures. During

safety standdown on the USS Comte De Grasse (DD-974), crewmembers arranged a series of demonstrations to show the value of personal protective equipment. They put hard hats on watermelons and dropped weights on them from the 04 level. The watermelons survived until a weight was dropped on them without the hard hat with predictable results.

Other demonstrations featured Corfram versus safety shoes in a flame test (the Corfram melted), flame-retardant clothes versus regular cotton shirts, and a balloon protected by a safety face shield while slag was tossed at it. Crewmembers also had emergency egress drills while blindfolded. Crewmembers learned some valuable lessons, but equally as important, they had a lot of fun in the process.

-- HM2 Knapp

Food for thought

Shipboard fitness requires smart snacking

When you take a morning snack break, munch on a late afternoon pick-me-up, or reach for an evening goodie, you could be eating healthfully, or undermining your nutritious eating pattern if you do not choose your snacks wisely.

Smart snacking requires that your snacks count as part of your daily nutrition -- not simply as "extras." Snacks should not just provide you with calories, but vitamins, minerals, fiber, water, protein or other essential nutrients to boost your daily nutrition.

Pay particular attention to the amount of fat found in some of the popular snack foods found in our own Mercy Mall. (See box at right.)

Just because some of these items are high in fat dose not mean it is a "bad" food. It is only bad for you if you can't afford the fat or the calories. Fresh fruit, pretzels, air-popped popcorn and saltines are some of the better low fat alternatives for snacking, as long as these food items are also used in moderation. The American Heart Association recommends no more that 30 percent of your daily caloric intake come from fat. That is about 60 - 70 grams for males and 50 - 60 grams of fat for females a day.

Your diet should contain a variety of foods, moderate amounts or proportions, include all food groups and taste good. Snacks can help you to obtain a nutritious diet if

chosen properly and in the correct proportions. Happy healthful snacking! -- Lt. N.A.B. Dickey

Amount	Item	Calories	Percentage of calories from fat
one bar	Snickers	280	45
1 ounce	Cheezy Balls	159	57
1 ounce	Pringles	170	58
1 ounce	Spanish Peanuts	170	74
1 ounce	Mixed Nuts	170	79
2 cookies	Oatmeal Raisin	110	41
1 bar	Butterfinger	280	39
1 bar	Hershey	240	53
3 cups	Popcorn-cheese	160	68
3 cups	Popcorn-plain	80	56
1 cup	Cup Noodles	125	36
1 ounce	Pretzels	111	8
10 biscuits	Biscuit Crackers	130	21
1 toastette	Toastettes	200	23
1 package	Chuckles	132	3
1/2 package	Starburst	240	19
1 package	Skittles	270	7

Shrink's soliloquy: What would Sigmund say?

I hope that by now you have realized that if you persist in reading these ramblings, it will provide you merely with a way to while away some time; it will not provide you with any earth-shattering or soul-strengthening insights or other such nonsense. Good, I just wanted to clarify that point. Actually, this column does achieve one lofty goal -- on Thursday afternoons it keeps me out of the path of hard-working field-dayers. (Hmm... is that a word?)

Yes, Mercy has its own token cross dresser (only one, you may say?)

Upon awakening this morning, I knew that there was something at least mildly positive about the day. At first I thought it was because it was Valentine's Day (yeah, right!), and then it dawned on me -- we're not having a casualty drill this Friday! Wow -- a Friday without a casualty drill -- gee, that's almost like a Tuesday without a fire/abandon ship drill -- can I handle it? I have to admit though, the casualty drill last week went 2,000 percent better than the one the preceding week. In reference to the latter, I don't want those forty or so "SIMULATED" (and I use the term very loosely!) depressed and anxious

staff members to worry. I won't reveal your names, but I DO have them carefully recorded -- particularly those of you who repeatedly requested to be restrained. I haven't seen such a display of disinhibition since the Docs had their last liberty. "Very interesting" as they say. So, a hearty "thanks" to those who participated in the drill last week, for not playing "THE PSYCHIATRY PATIENT FROM HELL." Also to remain nameless, is a certain "emergency" consult received during the drill. Yes, Mercy has its own token cross dresser (only one you may say?). The fellow looked rather lovely in Cmdr. Bernadette Grice's sapphire blue dress, but, as I told him, the color was all wrong for him (his "colors" are spring), and he should know that one NEVER wears a white handbag before April. So no, you CAN'T go home just because you cross dress (even if done tastefully). I have already told many of you the bottom line of behavior which will get you a ticket home, but seeing as how this is a family rag, I'll show some taste and refrain (gotta start sometime).

The good news is that the missing part for the sewing machine has allegedly arrived (much to the glee of the zipperless among us who have become quite skilled at pinning our pants up). Guys, if you want to develop em-

pathy, just try it for a day or two - that will also serve the purpose of giving the urologist something to do.

One particularly unique expression of passive-aggressive behavior was witnessed last week in the chow hall. Some singularly creative (or abysmally stupid) soul decided to cut the grapefruit lengthwise instead of crosswise one morning. It was fun to watch people first realize the problem, then sort of pick the halves up and stare at them. Some discarded them in disgust, while others diligently attempted to prepare and consume them in a valiant effort. I'm not sure, but it may be a very bad sign that I found this most entertaining -- the high point of my day.

For those of you who have pets at home, I'm sure you can appreciate how much we miss our four-legged and feathered friends. I have several bunnies at home that I miss, and think of frequently. It is nice to have little reminders of them. I mean, it sure warms the cockles of MY heart every time there is fried rabbit on the menu. Uh -- Hazel -- Violet, is that you?

So, hope you had a nice Valentine's Day. I received one interesting card with a request to "share some neuroses on a leather couch" -hmm... how about a naugahyde exam table? Later. -- Shrink

Chaplains corner: Courage in the storm

Do you remember Tom Dooley, that young doctor who organized hospitals, raised money and literally poured out his life in the service of the afflicted peoples in Southeast Asia? Here was a man whose deep relationship with God motivated him to abandon a soft career in the United States for a desperately difficult ministry overseas. In the end that relationship enabled him to die victoriously at the age of 34. The following is the letter he wrote to the president of Notre Dame, his alma mater, on December 1, 1960.

"Dear Father Hesburgh: They've got me down. Flat on my back, with plaster, sand bags and hot water bottles. I've contrived a way of pumping the bed up a bit so that, with a long reach, I can get to my typewriter... Two things prompt this note to you. The first is that whenever my cancer acts up a bit, and it is certainly "acting up" now, I turn inward. Less do I think of my hospitals around the world, or of 94 doctors,

fund-raisers and the like. More do I think of one Divine Doctor and my personal fund of grace. It has become pretty definite that the cancer has spread to the lumbar vertebra, accounting for all the back problems over the last two months. I have monstrous phantoms; all men do. And inside and outside the wind blows. But when the time comes, like now, then the storm around me does not matter. The winds within me do not matter. Nothing human or earthly can touch me. A peace gathers in my heart. What seems unpossessable, I can possess. What seems unfathomable, I can fathom. What is unutterable, I can utter. Because I can pray. I can communicate. How do people endure anything on earth if they cannot have God?"

Taken from the book "Illustrations Unlimited" James S. Hewett, editor. Submitted by Lt. Cmdr. J. D. Weadick, CHC, USNR

Physical exercise on Mercy; Yeehaw! Round 'em up!

There are so many types and degrees of physical exercise aboard USNS Mercy! It is absolutely astonishing -- everyone on this ship has their personal favorites. Many of us choose to incorporate several forms of exercise into our daily activities. After all, isn't variety the spice of life? And speaking of spices, how are those cinnamon cellulite rolls coming along?

GRAZING is rapidly becoming the latest exercise craze. It can be an aerobic activity depending on the distance required to complete the gastronomical-circuit.

The first graze is heralded by reveille. Reveille is the Navy's answer to alarm clocks. Depending on individual berthing location, some of us have more of an aerobic workout than others. But this is the first grazing of the day which is why it is called BREAK Fast! Or should I say make a fast break for it, because the entire herd aboard Mercy comes charging up the built-in Stairmasters. Gasping and wheezing, a calculated percentage of the herd can be counted on stopping off at the 01 starboard-side, midships, for their morning fix of tar and nicotine. The rest of the drove continue (Rowdy Yates of "Rawhide" fame would be proud). Some hope for an oxygen tent at the 02 Level and others merely apply another inch of "nitro-paste" to their chests. Thank goodness there is a Mark Seven

defibrillator in Sick Call! There have been some close calls on the 02 level.

The genesis of arterial plaque is the made-to-order omelet. Please remember, it's what YOU ordered! No, Mom doesn't work here, so don't expect crispy hickory-smoked bacon, just the right amount of onions in your hash browns or a "smile" face on your toast either!

...These heifers mosey up to the mess decks...Don't get in the way!...It's a feeding frenzy!

Somewhere, in every work space there is a GRAZING TABLE -- and don't play innocent with me -- you know what I'm talking about! This is the spot where everyone shares those goodies from home. This is the watering hole! The pause that refreshes! Satiating that mid-morning craving can be aerobically challenging and the "weak of stomach" must be warned. First, individual members of the herd must gallop to the table without looking like consuming calories was their primary intention. The prize winners of this group usually make that long and arduous hike to the 01 Level to get a Diet Coke. You just gotta have something to wash down month old brownies, right? Those with weak stomachs must remind themselves that color isn't everything -- penicillin is good for you -- and this may be the

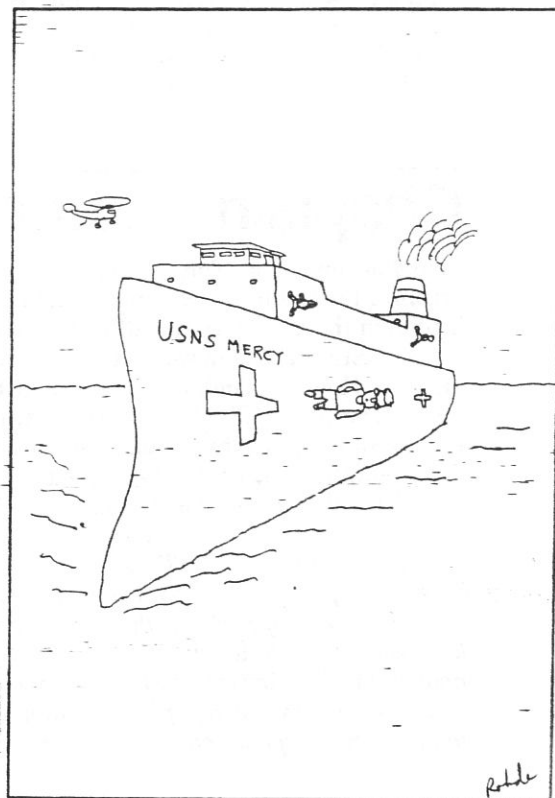
last chocolate chip cookie from somebody's mom you will ever get to eat!

Aerobic "grazing" turns into "gazing" at 10:20 - 10:30 when the heartiest of these heifers mosey up to the mess decks to purvey the noon menu. Don't get in the way! They have scouted out the line and staked out their claim to the noon-time epicurean delight. It's a feeding frenzy!!! The hardest of this herd moseys by the dessert bar and nonchalantly snitches a cookie for that extra endurance needed to wait in line. Throughout the afternoon, the "grazing" tables are revisited. The aerobic participants of this sport go under the guise of fostering interdepartmental relationships. Let's see that one in bullet form on FITREPS. Aaaah-hhhhhh -- caloric gratification. If their appetites are not satiated, a trip up the built-in Stairmaster to the Mercy Mall is certainly a must!!!

Finally, the evening meal time arrives. Something strange happens ... this frantic herd turns into a bunch of stragglers that Buffalo Bill couldn't muster up! Where did they all go? AH! But of course -- to the microwaves! Orville Redenbacher and radar-ranges are my best friends.

-Lt. Marsh

MEANWHILE ... BACK IN THE STATES :



Because of his development of the magnetic shoe, Bud revolutionized shipboard jogging...